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INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OSLO 000079

SIPDIS

AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO AMCONSUL ALMATY  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA PASS TO AMCONSUL ADANA  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/24

TAGS: [MNUC](#) [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [IR](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: THE NORWEGIANS MUSE ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND THE  
REGIME'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD

REF: 10 STATE 15979

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1.(C) SUMMARY: In two hours of discussions first with the desk officer for Iran and then separately with the Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs, both in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), it became clear that Norway sees a frustrating tension between the nuclear issue and the human rights issue. While the desk officer's view of Iran's intentions is marginally more charitable than our own, the disarmament Ambassador believes that the regime would "adore" a military strike by the West in order to crush the opposition and consolidate power, as the regime is "rotting from within." While the official GON position is to support sanctions at the UN Security Council because of the nuclear program, the desk officer believes this might end up being counterproductive. End Summary.

12. (C) Poloff met separately with Mae Tonheim, Iran Desk Officer, and Knut Langeland, Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs at the MFA to discuss reftel demarche on the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR). Both were well versed on the TRR issue and had no criticism of our policy.

13. (C) Tonheim said that Norway was, of course, concerned about Iran's lack of cooperation with the IAEA. When asked about pressure put on the Iranians, Tonheim said that contact with the Iranian Charge was usually driven by human rights concerns rather than the nuclear issue, but the disarmament section had met with the Charge as recently as January to encourage compliance with the IAEA.

HOPE DISSOLVES

14. (C) Tonheim said that there was much hope in the GON in the fall that Iran would accept the P5+1 package that was on the table as it should have been very attractive. Now, the GON's position is that Iran has been given chances to cooperate, and the international community needs to react, and Norway will support a sanctions process in the UN Security Council. On the other hand, Norway strongly opposes military action against Iran, which, she said, would "destabilize" the region. Poloff pointed out that a nuclear-armed Iran would also certainly destabilize the region.

NORWEGIAN VIEWS OF IRAN'S REAL AIM, AND LEAVING THE NPT

15. (C) Tonheim said that many in the MFA thought that the Iranians might be intending to get to the verge of developing a nuclear weapon, and then stop, using the ambiguity in their final intentions for their own diplomatic advantage. She cited a lack of consensus within the Iranian government about how far to go. She suggested that the nuclear issue would ultimately be used as a strategic card that could be played later. In contrast, Langeland said that "the composition and cohesion of the regime has changed" since that sort of analysis was credible. Langeland speculated that Iran would get to the point of being ready to create a nuclear weapon, then would just wait for a justification to pull out of the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), at which point they would declare they had become a nuclear weapons state. He suggested that this might possibly happen as soon as the NPT review conference. He said one possible mechanism might be that there would be "Iran fatigue" among the Non-Aligned Movement states, and if they abandoned Iran on some key point, Iran could declare itself "isolated" and use this as a pretext to leave the NPT. Separately, Langeland speculated that the Iranian regime might interpret China's abstention on an anti-Iran resolution at the UNSC as a weakening of international consensus, and an indication that they could spin the conflict as "Iran versus the West."

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TO CONSOLIDATE POWER, IRANIAN REGIME

WOULD "ADORE" A LIMITED MILITARY STRIKE

16. (C) Tonheim said that Norway was at least as concerned about the human rights situation inside Iran as it was about Iran destabilizing the region with its nuclear program. Tonheim said that the two conundrums posed by the regime complicated policy because their solutions were opposed. Isolating Iran with sanctions might actually strengthen the regime, which she characterized as "rotting from within." Anything the regime could use to point to foreign aggression or coercion would justify further crushing of the opposition. Poloff pointed out that the regime was already crushing the opposition, and seemed to need little further justification. Tonheim maintained that "broad sanctions are problematic," while repeating the GON policy that Norway supports consequences for Iran's noncompliance. Langeland went much further and said point blank that the Iranian regime would "adore" a limited military strike by the West or anyone who could be painted as "the Zionists", as this would give it cover to round up, kill, or imprison its opponents, while garnering sympathy from certain countries.

WHITE